Department of Labour and Advanced Education

2014-15 Statement of Mandate

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Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

We are pleased to present the 2014–2015 Statement of Mandate for the Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

Our department's focus is broad. It includes literacy and essential skills programs; apprenticeship training; colleges and universities; career and employment supports; workforce development and transition initiatives; labour market information; labour mobility; occupational health and safety; technical safety; private sector pensions; employment standards; and labour relations.

Our goal is to ensure all Nova Scotians believe their future is here, with each person confident in their abilities to prosper.

Over the next 12 months, staff with Labour and Advanced Education will continue working with employers, unions and workers across this province to get more people learning, more people working and working safely, and more sustainable businesses in our province.

And working with our safety partners, we will continue our efforts to build a culture of safety in this province, and improve overall enforcement and compliance practices, including balancing the need for education and awareness.

Our young people are the key to Nova Scotia's success. Today's youth are tomorrow's entrepreneurs, leaders, and skilled workers. Providing them with opportunities here at home is key. Working with business leaders, private sector, labour, and training providers, we will focus our efforts on modernizing the apprenticeship system so our young people have successful careers in the trades here in Nova Scotia. We will launch an industry-led apprenticeship agency aimed at increasing employer participation and expanding apprenticeship opportunities in the province.

The Workforce of the Future Table represents an exciting collaboration between leaders in business, education and training institutions, labour, and government coming together to tackle shared priority workforce issues. Through this table, we will highlight the importance of math and science so our kids have the education they need to take advantage of the jobs in our opportunity sectors. We will continue to work to connect post-secondary students with K-12 learners for mentoring and tutoring wherever possible. And, we will work with employers and educational institutions to offer a work experience component that will increase informed career decision making by students and better inform them of future job and career opportunities that exist in the province. The department will also improve the delivery of career services so that all Nova Scotians are able to manage their careers.

Nova Scotians need environments where they can innovate, grow and succeed. This is critical to our individual and economic successes. It strengthens our communities, helps to keep our young people here, and provides the potential for future business opportunities. Through the creation of sandboxes, we will expand opportunities for post-secondary students and innovators to experiment with new ideas, learn from their peers, and connect with industry to advance their ideas to the next level.

We will also help our students by eliminating the interest on provincial student loans that are in repayment, making post-secondary education more affordable and accessible for Nova Scotians.

With an aging and shrinking workforce, we will continue our plans to attract educated and skilled workers from around the world to share in our prosperity, and open the doors to welcoming workplaces to greet them in their new home.

We encourage readers to learn more about our department by visiting www.gov.ns.ca/lae/.

Kelly Regan
Minister

Sandra McKenzie
Deputy Minister

Department Mandate, Vision and Mission

The Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education works to contribute to a competitive workforce by making strategic investments in people, programs, services and partnerships. Our mandate is to provide a fair, equitable, safe, productive and inclusive environment in which to learn, work and live.

The broad mandate of the department includes:

- Regulatory responsibility for occupational health and safety, technical safety, pensions, the workers' advisers program, labour relations, and labour standards.

- Improving access among Nova Scotians to labour market information, employment services and learning programs that support their labour market attachment and growth. Strategic action is taken to align the needs of employees with those of employers to help all Nova Scotians prepare for, find and keep employment.

- Providing opportunities for individuals to advance at home, in the community or in the workplace through adult learning, literacy and essential skills, apprenticeship and skills development programs.

- Providing funding, services, and support to post-secondary institutions to ensure students maintain access to high quality post-secondary education and training.

Note:

- The Office of Immigration was transferred to the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs in January 2014.

- Responsibility for the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women was transferred to the Minister of the Department of Community Services in March 2014.

- The Office of the Fire Marshal, including responsibility for the Building Code, will be transferred to a new Department of Municipal Affairs, effective April 2014.

- Responsibility for the Voluntary Sector will be transferred to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, effective April 2014.

Vision

Our vision is that the Department of Labour and Advanced Education will foster Nova Scotians' belief in a bigger future - knowing where the jobs are and will be, building the skills to access those jobs, and working to their highest potential in safe, productive and inclusive workplaces.

Mission

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education will work to ensure that all Nova Scotians believe their future is here, with each person confident in their abilities to prosper. We will do this by maximizing our capacity to have more people learning, more people working and working safely, and more sustainable businesses in our province.

Strategic Directions

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education's strategic plan for the years 2013-2016 is to build a strong foundation to advance government priorities through the following six strategic directions:

Educate
Build a more responsive system of learning and training through partnerships with businesses, labour, institutions, and service providers, preparing Nova Scotians for a prosperous future.

Invest
Invest in the skills and knowledge required to build the workforce we need now and in the future.

Safeguard
Make a safe, fair, and equitable work environment a priority for all employers and employees.

Grow
Better meet labour market demands by retaining our youth, engaging under-represented groups, repatriating skilled Atlantic Canadians, and attracting newcomers.

Inform
Provide ease of navigation and access to enable Nova Scotians to get information about programs, services, and offerings.

Account
Improve investment outcomes through informed decision-making and accountability measurement and evaluation.

Government Priorities

The Department of Labour & Advanced Education's strategic directions support the Nova Scotia Government's 2014-2015 priorities of:

1. Consumer-focused energy solutions including a regulated, competitive energy market;
2. Prosperous businesses of all sizes - creating jobs across the province;
3. Responsible fiscal management;
4. Investing in student success with a renewed and strengthened education system;
5. Accessible, responsive healthcare;
6. Helping all Nova Scotians meet their fullest potential by supporting vulnerable communities.

2. Prosperous businesses of all sizes - creating jobs across the province

LAE is a committed partner in fostering a thriving business community and creating the conditions for economic growth in the province. Through our strategic directions to educate, invest, safeguard, grow and inform, we are partnering with business, labour, education and training providers and other service providers to develop the workforce and workplace conditions we need to grow and sustain higher-value jobs now and into the future.

The Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy's *Now or Never* report calls for bold action and a cultural shift to avoid long-term economic decline. This includes collaborative and innovative approaches to economic and workforce development and the role of business and our post-secondary education and training system. LAE has an important role to play in advancing these strategic goals.

LAE's START program is one example of promising new approaches to workforce development. START provides a mix of financial incentives to encourage Nova Scotian employers to hire Nova Scotians in need of work experience and to register and hire apprentices. Uptake in the START program has doubled over the past year and is successfully attaching participants to a job. We will continue to adapt and expand the delivery of this programming over the next year.

One Journey Work and Learn is another great example of collaboration between LAE, industry and the community. This program provides skill development and employment opportunities to unemployed or underemployed Nova Scotians in areas where there is an identified labour shortage.

The department is also using technology to improve the delivery of services to employers. The HR Toolkit is a free, web-based resource aimed at helping Nova Scotians employers recruit, develop and motivate staff. It provides information on HR best practices, forms/templates, and links to other online resources, all available in both English and French. Since its launch in 2012, the HR Toolkit has been accessed by almost 5,000 Nova Scotians.

Our web-based training portal, www.skillsonlinens.ca, offers thousands of online courses on various workplace topics. It allows participants to progress at their own pace and employers to monitor their employees' progress. Since its launch in 2012, over 6,300 individuals and 2,373 businesses have registered on the website.

The Workforce of the Future Table brings together business leaders; education and training providers; labour organizations; special interest groups; and government staff, to leverage their spheres of influence to promote our economic successes and develop strategies to address complex workforce issues. The leaders around this table will focus on changing five important things in five years: 1) increase employer participation in apprenticeship; 2) tell Nova Scotians where the job opportunities are; 3) make sure all Nova Scotians know that all jobs in the future require us to be good at math and science; 4) make a better effort to hire and retain young people; and 5) have more entrepreneurs per capita than any other jurisdiction in Canada.

LAE will continue to encourage employer investment in training over the next year. Through the Workplace Innovation & Productivity Skills Incentive (WIPSI), LAE provides funding to businesses in Nova Scotia for the purposes of employee and management skills development, introduction of new technologies and processes, and other productivity improvements. This year, the department will take steps to make the program more accessible for small- and medium-sized businesses in rural Nova Scotia. The Workplace Education Initiative (WEI) will continue to provide educational assessments for workplaces and connect them with workplace educators who can help employees improve their essential skills.

Nova Scotia's Apprenticeship system recently underwent a review, which highlighted the need for more employer engagement. To that end, we are creating a special operating agency that will be industry-led and expand apprenticeship opportunities across the province.

The department will encourage entrepreneurship in Nova Scotia through the Self-Employment program, which provides funding to organizations that help eligible unemployed Nova Scotians start their own businesses. In 2013-2014, the Self-Employment Program worked with 18 organizations to help 341 Nova Scotians pursue their dream of business ownership.

Innovation and entrepreneurship will further be supported through the establishment of on-campus sandboxes which foster collaboration between the academic and private sector to develop new ideas, products, and businesses.

We are also working on building awareness of the department's various programs and services for employers and employees, including their rights and responsibilities regarding safe and fair workplaces. Through the Province's Workplace Safety Strategy, the department is providing smaller businesses across Nova Scotia with access to tools that will help them enhance safety in their workplaces.

In addition, LAE Senior Officials, in partnership with officials from Economic, Rural Development and Tourism and Nova Scotia Business Inc., will visit 100 of Nova Scotia's top businesses over the next twelve months to build an understanding of how government may help grow their business.

3. Responsible fiscal management

LAE is taking positive steps to improve our accountability to all of our stakeholders and practice responsible fiscal management. Through our strategic direction to improve accountability, LAE is working to strengthen departmental evaluation and performance measurement functions and committing to ongoing communication with the public.

Through the implementation of memoranda of understanding with the universities and the Nova Scotia Community College, LAE is ensuring that our Provincial investments in post-secondary education institutions are sustainable into the future.

The department works jointly with the federal government to develop and report on meaningful outcome measures for our labour market agreements and is taking steps to maximize federal investment in labour market programming. LAE's agreement and case management system for labour market programs, LaMPSS contains a robust business intelligence capacity allowing us to improve our performance through analysis of program and financial data.

4. Investing in student success with a renewed and strengthened education system

Helping to develop a culture of continuous learning for Nova Scotians has been a goal of LAE for many years. Our strategic directions of educate and inform, will help advance this goal.

The department works to ensure that sustainable, quality post-secondary education is delivered to Nova Scotian students through learning institutions that include universities, the Nova Scotia Community College and private career colleges. We also provide valuable career planning and labour market information to students and work to facilitate the transition from school to the workforce.

This year, with the creation of the special operating agency for the apprenticeship and trades qualifications system, we will start the process of examining NSCC programs in designated trades for the purpose of reallocating resources across the trades training continuum to where they can best support apprentices to succeed in completing their program.

In addition, the department has committed to implementing a new graduate scholarship program in 2014-15. Annual spending will be $1.85M in 2014-15 and $3.7M in 2015-16 to support 300 graduate level scholarships for research and innovation, ranging in value from $10,000 to $15,000. Through these scholarships the Province intends to derive more direct economic impact from academic and business research and development activity.

LAE's Nova Scotia School of Adult Learning (NSSAL) is a learning resource available to Nova Scotians seeking to improve their literacy skills and achieve high school credentials. The department recently introduced online GED tests, another example of how LAE is working to improve its delivery of services to adult learners.

5. Accessible, responsive healthcare

Prevention is a big part of health care, and LAE is helping to ensure that workers remain safe and healthy while at work through implementation of the Workplace Safety Strategy.

The department is also supporting fair, equitable, and stable employment in the health care sector through effective labour relations, labour standards, and sustainable pensions.

6. Helping all Nova Scotians meet their fullest potential by supporting vulnerable communities.

Under the strategic directions to invest and grow, LAE is undertaking activities to promote equal opportunity for employment for all of our citizens, including older workers and persons with disabilities.

Through the Labour Market Agreement negotiation with the federal government, the Province is working to protect funding/programming that helps our most vulnerable citizens prepare for, find, and maintain employment.

LAE provides funding and grants for disability-related equipment and services that students with disabilities receive while completing post-secondary study. These grants support the accommodations or adaptive equipment and on-site counseling that students with permanent disabilities attending post-secondary training need. The number of students with disabilities graduating from post-secondary institutions in Nova Scotia has increased greatly over the past five years.

Through our adult education programs, persons who may be vulnerable due to a lack of in-demand essential skills are supported in developing their skill set, enabling them to be more active participants in their community and in the workforce.

The Targeted Initiative for Older Workers is a joint venture between the Government of Canada and LAE, which aids unemployed older workers in communities affected by significant workforce downsizing or workplace closures through programming aimed at reintegrating them into employment. The initiative has been a great success in recent years and the Federal government announced an extension of the program in the February 2014 budget.

LAE will also transform the delivery of career services so that all Nova Scotians can get help to reach their full employment potential and successfully manage their careers. This includes consistent quality service standards and the integration of both in-person and virtual career services.

The department also provides important protections for temporary foreign workers in Nova Scotia and requires both employers and recruiters to keep proper documentation. All post-secondary institutions receiving international students must be designated and are subject to a variety of conditions aimed at ensuring international students have a positive and productive learning experience.

Through the development of a sustainable framework for private pension plans in Nova Scotia, LAE is working to protect a valuable source of income for many seniors.

Budget Context

Labour and Advanced Education			
	2013-2014 Estimate	**2013-2014 Forecast**	**2014-2015 Estimate**
Program & Service Area	($thousands)	($thousands)	($thousands)
Gross Department Expenses:	353,412	367,820	348,420
Administration	1,026	992	1,073
Corporate Policy and Services	6,031	5,963	5,640
Safety	13,135	13,271	14,133
Labour Services	7,290	7,194	7,820
Skills and Learning	128,512	127,942	125,870
Higher Education	55,939	71,697	55,456
School Cap Amortization	5,850	5,850	5,511
Community College Grants	128,834	128,834	132,917
Office of Immigration	6,050	5,269	0
NS Advisory Council Status of Women	745	808	0
Total Gross Departmental Expenses	353,412	367,820	348,420
Additional Information:			
Fees and Other Charges	(1,882)	(1,758)	(1,878)
Ordinary Revenues, Fees and Recoveries	(127,488)	(128,454)	(123,960)
TCA Purchase Requirements	1,050	200	0
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	327	292.8	283.3

Performance Measurement

1) STRATEGIC DIRECTION **Educate:** Build a more responsive system of learning and training through partnerships with businesses, labour, institutions and service providers, preparing Nova Scotians for a prosperous future.			
OUTCOME (immediate or intermediate) Collaborative partnerships with businesses, labour, educational institutions and service providers that support responsive education, training and work experience programs.			
MEASURE	**BASE YEAR DATA**	**2014-15 TARGET**	**TRENDS**
1.1) Participation in LAE employer-sponsored training and work experience programs (not co-op) (including START, One Journey, SkillsOnlineNS, Workplace Innovation & Productivity Skills Incentive)	2012-13 Total o 7,765 clients served o 593 businesses • START 2012-13 (part year from Oct 2012) o 201 clients served o 115 businesses • One Journey 2012-13 o 191 clients served o 36 businesses • SkillsOnlineNS 2012-13 (part year) o 3,233 clients served o 347 businesses • WIPSI 2012-13 o 4,140 clients served o 95 businesses	Increase participation in employer-sponsored training and work experience programs	2013-14 Total (part year to Dec 31/13) o 11,586 clients served o 3,003 businesses • START 2013-14 o 562 clients served o 462 businesses • One Journey 2013-14 o 168 clients served o 5 businesses • SkillsOnlineNS 2013-14 o 6,352 clients served o 2,373 businesses • WIPSI 2013-14 o 4,504 clients served o 163 businesses
1.2) % of 18-64 year olds who indicated that over the past 12 months, they have been sponsored or supported by an employer to take education or training (LAE's Labour Market Activity and Intention Survey (LMAIS))	2012: 39% of NS employees	Increase to 45% over 3 years	2013: 40% of NS employees
1.3) Implementation of Memoranda of Understanding with Universities and NSCC; and implementation of sandboxes	N/A	Completion	MOUs with universities set for renewal in 2015; NSCC MOU signed in 2014

2014-15 Strategic Actions to Achieve Target

- Identify and respond to priority needs of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, make appropriate linkages/referrals to existing programs/services, and identify areas for enhancement.
- In collaboration with our learning partners, create an environment that promotes lifelong learning and supports the development of the necessary skills and aptitudes to be competitive in both local and global labour markets.
- Develop quality programs where there is a shared responsibility with the business community and government to target employment readiness and encourage increased employer investment in skills training.
- Work with employers and educational institutions to create and offer work experiences that will increase informed career decision making by students.
- Collaborate with universities and business to develop partnerships for innovation.

2) STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Invest: Invest in the required skills and knowledge to build the workforce we need now and in the future.

Outcome (immediate or intermediate)
Accessible employment supports, training programs and information services that help Nova Scotians seize and create opportunities for employment.

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA	2014-15 TARGET	TRENDS
2.1) Number of people trained through LAE programs (including Skills Development, Apprenticeship, Workplace Education, Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning)	2011-12 Total 19,535 SD-5,707 Apprentices- 5,922, as of Sept 2012 WEI-3,400 NSSAL-4,506	Maintain number of clients accessing training	2013-14 (to Dec 31/13) Total: 10,500 SD- 1,603 Apprentices- 6,009 WEI- 2,888 NSSAL- N/A 2012-13 Total 21,142 SD-6,100 Apprentices- 5942, as of March 2013 WEI- 4,639 NSSAL- 4,461
2.2) % of NSCC graduates working in a related field	2012: 83%	Maintain or increase employment in a related occupation for NSCC graduates	This is a new measure
2.3) % of 18-64 year olds who went through career transition in the last 2 years who agreed that they had sufficient information and advice to make career decisions (LMAIS)	2013: 48% (8 or higher on a 1-10 scale)	50%	This is a new measure
2.4) Ratio of loans to grants in Student Assistance	2009-10: 80% loans/20% grants	Maintain 40% grants	2013-14: 60/40 – 40% 2012-13: 65/35 – 35% 2011-12: 70/30 – 30% 2010-11: 80/20 – 20% 2009-10: 80/20 – 20%

2014-15 Strategic Actions to Achieve Target

- Implement the recommendations of the Apprenticeship System Review in order to increase employer engagement and apprentice completion rates.
- Transform the organization and delivery of career services so that all Nova Scotians are able to manage their careers.
- Make available to all Nova Scotians, timely and relevant information that clearly identifies what jobs will be in demand, what skills are needed for those jobs, and how to identify training opportunities.
- Embrace technology to help improve access to education, training, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities for all Nova Scotians.
- Develop cooperative working arrangements with other Atlantic provinces to build a skilled and mobile workforce for the region.

3) STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Safeguard: Make a safe, fair, and equitable work environment a priority for all employers and employees.

OUTCOME (immediate or intermediate)
LAE is leading the building of a culture of safety in Nova Scotia through education, enforcement and strong partnerships in workplace, technical and fire safety.

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA	2014-15 TARGET	TRENDS
3.1) % of staff who expressed that the department creates a safe work environment ("How's Work Going?" survey)	2004: 67%	LAE has the highest score on safety across all departments	2013: 84% 2011: 84% 2009: 83% 2006: 74% 2005: 82% 2004: 67%
3.2) % of 18-64 year old Nova Scotians who agree that their work environment is safe and healthy (LMAIS)	2012: 67% (8 or higher on 1-10 scale)	Improvement in score	2013: 69% (8 or higher on 1-10 scale)
3.3) Compliance with the Occupational Health & Safety Act and regulations by outside organizations (through an Internal Responsibility System)	2008-09: 71%	IRS compliance at 85% or better	2012-13: 86% 2011-12: 82% 2010-11: 84% 2009-10: 79% 2008-09: 71%

2014-15 Strategic Actions to Achieve Target

- Continue to implement the Workplace Safety Strategy and review of administrative penalties.
- Promote a culture of safety through a collaborative working relationship with all partners to enhance workplace, building, fire and technical safety throughout Nova Scotia.
- Improve overall enforcement and compliance practices, including balancing the need for education and awareness.
- Advance a flexible, risk-managed, and results-based legislative framework to ensure that minimum regulated safety standards are achieved or exceeded.
- Identify and advance opportunities to improve and modernize policies and programs to ensure all workers understand their rights and responsibilities under the Labour Standards Code.
- In collaboration with employers, employees, actuaries, administrators and the Federal Government, develop a sustainable framework for private pension plans in Nova Scotia.

4) STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Grow: Better meet labour market demands by retaining our youth, engaging under-represented groups.

OUTCOME (immediate or intermediate)

Young Nova Scotians see more career opportunities in the province and under-represented communities are engaged in education and employment.

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA	2014-15 TARGET	TRENDS
4.1) % of 18-44 year olds who are fairly to very confident in meeting their long-term career objectives while living and working in Nova Scotia (LMAIS)	2012: 57% confident	Increase over 3 years	2013: 50% confident
4.2) Number of international students in post-secondary education in Nova Scotia	2008-09:3,822 (9%)	Maintain or increase international student numbers	2012-13: 6,605 (15%) 2011-12: 5,863 (14%) 2010-11: 5,066 (12%) 2009-10: 4,398 (11%) 2008-09: 3,822 (9%)

2014-15 Strategic Actions to Achieve Target

- Undertake an awareness campaign aimed at Nova Scotia students to promote knowledge of future job and career opportunities that exist in the province.
- Be the education choice for out-of-province students and enhance their options for staying in Nova Scotia post-graduation to contribute to a diverse population and a growing economy.
- Work with communities of under-represented groups and underemployed on how best to support education, training and workforce attachment for their communities.

5) STRATEGIC DIRECTION **Inform:** Provide ease of navigation and access to enable Nova Scotians to get information about programs, services, and offerings.			
OUTCOME (immediate or intermediate) Improved awareness of and access to LAE's programs and services.			
MEASURE	**BASE YEAR DATA**	**2014-15 TARGET**	**TRENDS**
5.1) # of unique visitors to careers.novascotia.ca website	2013-2014: 76,356 total website visits from April 1 to Dec 31 2013	85,000 visits	First full year of data available in 13-14. Traffic on the site is at a good level and shows both information and program pages being accessed.
5.2) Awareness and accessibility of core LAE programs and services	N/A	N/A	New measure being developed, no data available

2014-15 Strategic Actions to Achieve Target

- Visit Nova Scotia's employers in growth sectors to proactively assess needs and work together to generate awareness and utilization of government programming.
- Work proactively with our partners to build and activate a shared vision for achieving the workforce we need.
- Develop innovative approaches to inform employers with information about relevant policies, programs and services.
- Promote the accessibility and viability of post-secondary education to parents and potential students.
- Support informed decision-making through relevant, accurate and timely labour market information and products. Modernize the client service experience to enable better access to, and navigation of, Labour and Advanced Education policies, programs and services.
- Invest in the knowledge and development of staff to encourage a climate of creativity and innovation to achieve strategic priorities.

6) STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Account: Improve investment outcomes through informed decision-making and accountability measurement and evaluation.

OUTCOME (immediate or intermediate)

Meaningful evaluation and performance measures enable the reporting of progress and impact of LAE's work to Nova Scotians.

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA	2014-15 TARGET	TRENDS
6.1) Infrastructure to support the development and collection of departmental measures and updates	New system launched in 2013-14	Establishment of departmental performance measures and data collection plan	Project on track
6.2) # of public reports on departmental activities and impact	N/A	N/A	New measure, no data available

2014-15 Strategic Actions to Achieve Target

- Build a robust monitoring and reporting system to track progress and impact.
- Develop a communications plan to publicly report on program investment, outcomes, and impact.
- Meet our obligations in implementing labour market programs funded by federal/provincial agreements.
- Evaluate key departmental strategies Workforce and Workplace Safety--- to ensure efforts and resources are coordinated and adjustments are made as appropriate to continue to meet objectives for successful implementation
- Endeavour to make program/funding decisions and inspection outcomes publicly available.